

Sample Letter that School Administrators May Wish to Send to the School Community

You may have heard that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has recommended air quality monitoring at 62 schools around the country as part of a new initiative to ensure children are breathing healthy outdoor air. Our school is one of the schools that the EPA has identified for priority monitoring.

EPA identified schools for monitoring based on information that raised some questions about air quality that merit investigation. That information included the best data available to EPA scientists about air pollution in the vicinity of schools, results of a computer modeling analysis, results from a recent newspaper analysis, and information from state and local air agencies.

Measuring the levels of pollutants in the air will help EPA understand whether outdoor air quality at our school poses any health concerns. EPA will be monitoring for chemicals from sources such as industrial facilities and cars, trucks and buses. These chemicals are known as “air toxics.”

During the next several weeks, parents, teachers, staff and children may notice some activity at the school as monitoring experts visit the school to select a site and install and test the monitoring equipment. Once the monitors begin operating, they will be in place for about 60 days. EPA will report results of the monitoring for each school and will explain what those results mean.

While the monitoring is under way, EPA will help us take steps to improve air quality in and around the school. Those may include anti-idling campaigns to reduce pollution that comes from cars and school buses, and simple steps to improve air quality indoors, where students spend most of their time.

If you have any questions about the monitoring, please contact Jaime Wagner at 312-886-9402, or at wagner.jaime@epa.gov, or visit the Web site EPA set up for this special project at www.epa.gov/schoolair.